



From the Commander...

As commander of The United States Air Force Band, I take our duty to preserve and foster America's national heritage very seriously. A critical part of this mission is reflected by the Band's commitment to today's leading composers and arrangers. Not only do we share their music with millions of listeners worldwide, we are also deeply committed to the continued creation of new musical works. I would like to take a moment to explain a few of our vehicles for accomplishing this monumental task.

Since 1993, The USAF Band has sponsored the biennial Colonel Arnald D. Gabriel Award, named after our conductor emeritus. This well-known competition for emerging young American composers ensures the creation and performance of fresh, new works for the symphonic wind ensemble. In 1995, the Band instituted a similar competition for jazz composers. Named after Airmen of Note alumnus and renowned composer Sammy Nestico, this annual award has led to the creation of many cutting-edge jazz compositions. We are proud to recognize and encourage these emerging American writers. Each winning composer is invited to Washington, D.C., where the chosen work is performed and recorded by "America's Band."

Throughout its distinguished history, The USAF Band has forged lasting relationships with America's preeminent composers. The Band has

commissioned many new pieces that have since worked their way into the standard repertoire. Distinguished musicians like Claude T. Smith, Libby Larson and Alfred Reed have left an indelible mark on our musical legacy. Today, the tradition of commissioning new music is alive and well. In February, the Concert Band had the privilege of premiering Dr. Jack Stamp's newest work, *Escapade*, at the College Band Directors' National Association convention in Denton, Texas. Additionally, we recently released a recording of new works for symphonic wind ensemble, written specifically for our organization. Entitled *American Premieres*, it features the music of Timothy Mahr, Roger Nixon, Dana Wilson, Luigi Zaninelli, Jack Stamp and Ira Hearshen. We are proud to be cultural pioneers, expanding the frontier of modern American music through a partnership with these extraordinary artists.

The United States Air Force Band is the workplace of some of today's most talented composers and arrangers. Continuing the legacy of excellence established by Sammy Nestico, CMSgts Floyd Werle, Lawrence Odom, Michael Davis and others, these exceptional writers create music that thrills audiences around the globe. This is never more apparent than during the Band's annual Guest Artist Series. Our arranging staff, led by chief arranger MSgt Larry MacTaggart, is known throughout the music industry for creating innovative studio orchestra arrangements. These wonderful charts help attract world-renowned artists, who eagerly donate their time and talent. Following their performance,



we give the arrangements to our guests to keep to enhance their future symphony orchestra engagements. These artists openly share their positive experience with other celebrities and word spreads throughout the industry.

This year alone, our arranging staff has dedicated several hundred hours to ensure the resounding success of our 35th annual Guest Artist Series. If you happen to visit our nation's capital during the month of March, please join us for the final three performances, which feature Freda and Scherrie Payne, José Feliciano and Rita Coolidge. As you listen to The USAF Band and Symphony Orchestra, please take a moment to appreciate the gifted musicians who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to arrange the music you enjoy at each performance.

Lowell E. Graham, Colonel, USAF
Commander/Conductor

